

# Future Squad Handbook

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*Selection process, Eligibility Requirements,  
Training & Representation Fees*

This document is the official Handbook for the Future Squad, eligibility, fees, and expectations. It ensures transparency and consistent standards for players, parents, and coaches.

**Website:** <https://tabletennis.net.nz/coaching/squad-coaching/>

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# 1. Future Squad Culture and Expectations

The foremost criterion for selection to the Future Squad is the demonstration of positive attitude, commitment, and sportsmanship. Players must exhibit a strong work ethic, respect for coaches, teammates, and opponents, and a willingness to continually improve both on and off the table.

Commitment to regular training sessions, punctuality, and active participation in team activities are essential qualities expected from all members of the Future Squad.

The purpose of the Future Squad is player development, not immediate representation at the NZ Open each year. The Future Squad focuses on building strong fundamentals ensuring players are prepared and confident before they progress to the Auckland Squad. In contrast, the Auckland Squad (Intermediate & Elite) is designed to prepare players to represent the ATTA at the NZ Open each year.

The Auckland Table Tennis Association (ATTA) promotes a positive, unified, and respectful environment through the "One-Team" Policy and clear behavioural expectations. This applies to all players, parents, and coaches at training, qualification tournaments, competitions, and team events.

## One-Team Policy

At the ATTA, we have a "one-team" policy for all players, parents, and coaches who are part of our Future Squad. The policy means that we work together to foster a positive and supportive environment for all team members. The policy applies at all times to training, qualification tournaments, individual competitions, and team competitions whether held at the Auckland Table Tennis Stadium or elsewhere.

The "one-team" policy means that:

- players, parents, and coaches must **not** coach, signal, speak to players, clap, or otherwise support individual players or doubles pairs when members of the Future Squad, or Auckland Squad, are competing against each other
- players, parents, and coaches must remain neutral, or they will be asked to leave the vicinity of the playing area for the duration of the game in question
- players, parents, and coaches must be respectful and display sportsmanship towards all members of the Future Squad, and Auckland Squad
- players, parents, and coaches must not engage in any behaviour that gives one teammate an unfair advantage over another
- players, parents, and coaches should address concerns in a timely and appropriate

manner while maintaining a respectful attitude towards each other

- players, parents, and coaches should consider the interests of the team in addition to their own personal interests
- players, parents, and coaches should actively support fellow Future Squad, and Auckland Squad, teammates when they are competing against players from other Regional Associations.

Non-compliance may lead to strict action (severity-dependent); parents' actions can affect their child's standing.

### **Player and Parent Expectations**

- Punctuality: Arrive 15 minutes early
- Focus: Full attention on training/improvement; use breaks appropriately
- Respect: Follow coach directions
- Play Fair: Exhibit sportsmanlike conduct (no excessive noise, intimidation, cheating)
- One-Team adherence: As above

### **Consequences (Progressive Warning System)**

There will be consequences for players and parents not adhering to expectations. Note, a parent's actions will bear consequences for their child.

1. First offence: verbal warning to stop breaking the guidelines within our "one-team" policy, or sit out remainder of session.
2. Second offence: stand down from Future Squad training for one week; return requires demonstration of future commitment. Players will only be invited back to Future Squad training if they demonstrate a willingness to meet expectations moving forward. They must clearly explain what specific changes they will make to meet those expectations.
3. Third offence: permanent stand down from Future Squad (welcome in other ATTA activities like Junior Club, Interclub, tournaments).

### **Parents on stadium floor during Future Squad training**

Parents are allowed on the stadium floor during Future Squad training only for specific purposes (eg. picking up balls for other children in private coaching, or personal practice). Parents are not to interact with Future Squad members, or Future Squad coaches, during sessions.

## 2. Becoming a Future Squad Member

### Invitation to Future Squad

Players who are eligible to compete in Under 9 events (as at 31 December of the previous year) are eligible to be assessed for Future Squad.

The Auckland Coaching Team may consider the number of players per age group per gender who are already in the Future Squad when inviting new players.

Every player invited to the Future Squad must be of a level where they are able to practice with other members of the Future Squad. This is determined by an objective skill assessment carried out by the Auckland Coaching Team.

### Future Squad Objective Skill Assessment:

Category	Description	Max Points
Ball Control & Coordination	Alternate bounce on forehand and backhand sides for 60 seconds	20
Forehand (FH) Drive Consistency	40 FH ball sequence, count number of consecutive drives without interruption	12
Backhand (BH) Drive Consistency	40 BH ball sequence, count number of consecutive drives without interruption	12
Forehand (FH) – Backhand (BH) Alternation	FH + BH continuous sequence (10 repetitions) with correct position (stance) transition	10
Rally Placement Test	Coach blocks with the BH all table free, player must place 20 balls into a designated target zone on the coach's side of the table	10
Basic Service Control	10 serves to marked target zones (four zones); short to FH, short to middle, long to BH, long to middle	10
Push (Chop) Control	BH-FH alternation, moving between BH corner and FH corner, conduct 10 pushes to the coach's BH side	10
Footwork Drill	12-ball footwork sequence alternating FH, middle, BH movement sequence	10
Reaction Test	Catch a reaction ball after it bounces with the playing hand, 6 attempts	6

Players must achieve a minimum overall score of 70 points to be considered for invitation to the Future Squad. In addition, players must score at least 50% of the maximum points available in each individual Category, ensuring they demonstrate a basic level of competence across all assessed skills. All newly invited players will be subject to a one-month trial period. Selection may be revoked if behavioural standards are not met or if the required skill level is not demonstrated.

For further details, please refer to Appendix A: Future Squad Objective Skill Assessment.

### **Assessment Frequency:**

Held four times a year — generally at the following times:

- Assessment 1: March (after Qualification Tournament 1)
- Assessment 2: May (after Qualification Tournament 2)
- Assessment 3: August (after Qualification Tournament 3)
- Assessment 4: October/November

Assessment frequency and timing during the year is at the discretion of the Auckland Coaching Team.

### **Future Squad Levels**

Future Squad players may be divided into Levels for the purposes of more closely matching playing ability when training throughout the season.

### **Individual Performance Plans (IPPs) and Ongoing Monitoring**

All Future Squad players will receive an Individual Performance Plan (IPP).

The purpose of the IPP is to support long-term player development by providing clear direction for training and competition throughout the season. It is designed to give players clarity on what to focus on in daily training, squad sessions, and match-play.

The IPP is a working document, not a formality. It will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect progress, emerging strengths, and areas requiring further development. Players are expected to take ownership of their IPP, using it as a reference point for goal setting and performance reflection.

The IPP framework supports consistent coaching across the Future Squad programme, while allowing flexibility to address each player's individual needs and rate of development.

To support objective tracking of improvement, existing Future Squad players may be periodically reassessed using the Future Squad Objective Skill Assessment. These assessments provide measurable benchmarks and help inform adjustments to each player's IPP across the season.

### **Transition after 11 Years Old:**

When a Future Squad player is no longer eligible for Under 11 events (as at 31 December of the previous year), if they are unable to qualify for the Auckland Squad, they will be respectfully asked to begin attending Junior Club to create opportunities for

younger players. This ensures that spots in the Future Squad become available for young players under the age of 9 who demonstrate promise. Players who are no longer eligible for Under 11 events can still make it into the Auckland Squad through the Junior Club pathway.

### 3. Becoming an Auckland Squad Member

#### A Transparent, Level-Based Selection Pathway

The primary purpose of Auckland Squads is to develop players to represent the ATTA at the New Zealand Open annually. Only eligible, Auckland-affiliated players are selected. Auckland Squad members exclusively represent Auckland in junior team events.

Auckland Squad Levels (Highest to Lowest):

- Auckland Elite 1 Squad
- Auckland Elite 2 Squad
- Auckland Intermediate A1 Squad
- Auckland Intermediate A2 Squad
- Auckland Intermediate B1 Squad
- Auckland Intermediate B2 Squad

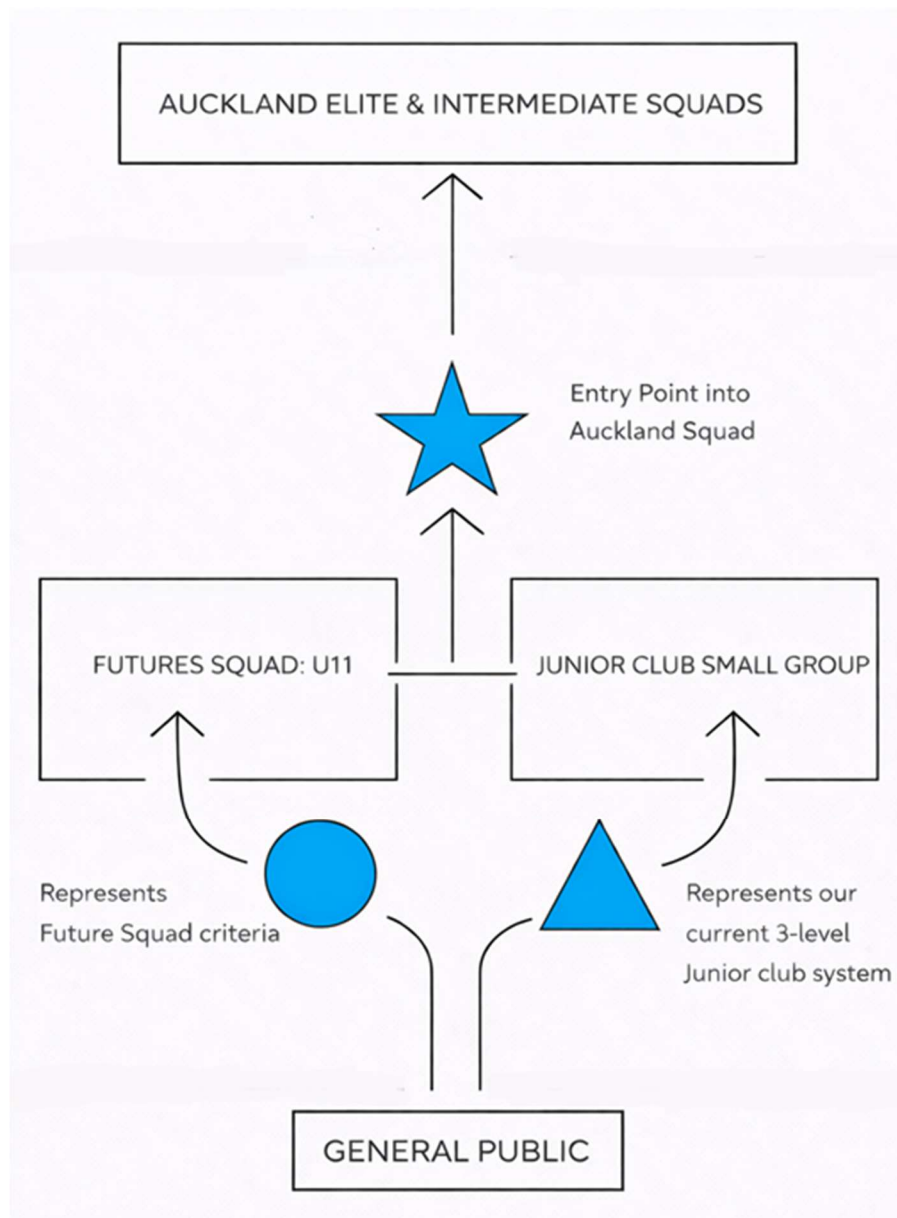
ATTA aims to field the strongest team in each age/gender category.

#### Guaranteed Spots

Allocated to top-ranked players (determined by unanimous Auckland Coaching Team agreement) as follows:

Category	Guaranteed Spots (Girls)	Guaranteed Spots (Boys)
U13	4	4
U15	4	4
U19	4	4

Remaining spots filled via skill-based ★ pathway i.e. Qualification Tournaments (★ – refer to Diagram below).



### ★ Entry Point into Auckland Squad

Skill-based entry (not age alone) from Future Squad (U11) or Junior Club Small Group. Refer to the attached diagram (flowchart showing progression from General Public → Future Squad U11 / Junior Club Small Group → ★ → Intermediate/Elite Squads).

## Process Details

Held three times a year — generally at the following times:

- Qualification Tournament 1: February
- Qualification Tournament 2: April/May
- Qualification Tournament 3: July/August

## First-Stage Round Robin(s):

- Junior Club Small Group: Separate round robins for U13 Girls, U13 Boys, U15 Girls, U15 Boys.
- Future Squad (U11): Round robins gender-separated only (Girls and Boys).
- The winner of the Future Squad Girls' round robin will compete against the winner of the Junior Club Small Group U13 Girls' round robin, and the winner of the Future Squad Boys' round robin will compete against the winner of the Junior Club Small Group U13 Boys' round robin.
- Overall winners per category (U13 Girls, U13 Boys, U15 Girls, U15 Boys) advance to the Second-Stage Play-Off(s).

## Second-Stage Play-Off(s):

- The default position is that the top 1 player in each category (U13 Girls, U13 Boys, U15 Girls, and U15 Boys) from the first-stage round robin will compete against the lowest-ranked 1 player in the same category once the results of the relevant Auckland Squad Internal Qualification Tournament have been released. If there is any change from the default position, this information will be communicated to players prior to the conclusion of the qualification tournament in question.
- A player with a guaranteed place in the Auckland Squad must still compete if they are the lowest-ranked player in their category following the relevant Auckland Squad Internal Qualification Tournament.
- **Promotion:** The winner of each category in the Second-Stage Play-Off will secure a place in the Auckland Squad. If a player is promoted, they will directly replace the player who was relegated within the existing Auckland Squad structure. All newly selected players will be subject to a one-month trial period. Selection may be revoked if behavioural standards are not met or if the required skill level is not demonstrated.
- **Relegation:** The player who loses in each Second-Stage Play-Off will not retain a place in the Auckland Squad.

- If a player is relegated from the Auckland Squad, they will be placed into one of the following programmes:
  - (a) Future Squad if they are eligible for under 11 events;
  - (b) Junior Club Small Group if they are ineligible for under 11 events.

## **Qualification Tournaments and Play-Offs**

Auckland Squad Qualification Tournaments are a core part of the selection process for each Auckland Squad level and provide players with the opportunity to be promoted to a higher level or demoted to a lower level.

There will be no dispensation for missing qualification tournaments or related play-off matches. If a player does not participate for any reason – including injury, illness, or unavailability – the outcome will be treated as if the player had competed and lost.

Players may record their matches during Qualification Tournaments, provided they set up and operate their own recording device. Parents are not permitted to set up the device on the player's behalf. Video recordings will not be reviewed in the event of a dispute. Players are responsible for keeping score. In the event of a significant scoring dispute, Auckland Squad coaches may assign an umpire to oversee the remainder of the match.

## **Special Cases:**

- If any age and gender category does not have the full allocation of four players, the top qualifying player from the relevant First-Stage Round Robin in that category will be automatically offered a place in the Auckland Squad. For example, if there are only three (3) girls in the Auckland Squad who are Under 13, then the winner of the Under 13 Girls category from the First-Stage Round Robin will automatically join the Auckland Squad without being required to play-off against the lowest ranked Under 13 Girl currently in the Auckland Squad.
- If the Auckland Squad is not at full capacity and can accommodate up to four additional players, the top player from each category at the conclusion of the First-Stage Round Robin will be offered direct entry into the Auckland Intermediate B2 Squad.
- Players seeking to join the Auckland Squad may be permitted to participate directly in the relevant Auckland Squad Internal Qualification Tournament if the Auckland Coaching Team unanimously agree that the player is capable of representing Auckland in the top team for their age and gender category. All newly selected players will be subject to a one-month trial period.

## **Withdrawals:**

If a player withdraws from the Future Squad after confirming their commitment for the year they will not be eligible to rejoin the squad in the following year.

- If a player wishes to rejoin the Future Squad after a period away, acceptance will be at the discretion of the Auckland Coaching Team. If accepted, the player will re-enter the Future Squad one level below the level they were at when they ceased attending.
- Any reasons for withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the Auckland Coaching Team (via Dinyar Irani, [pm@tabletennis.net.nz](mailto:pm@tabletennis.net.nz)). Special dispensation may be granted to players with serious injuries or significant medical conditions, allowing them to rejoin the Future Squad the following year. To be considered, players must provide written confirmation from a doctor, surgeon, or relevant medical professional verifying the severity of the injury or condition. Decisions regarding dispensation will be at the discretion of the Auckland Coaching Team.

## **4. Eligibility Requirements for Future Squad Members**

Eligibility requirements for Future Squad each season are as follows:

- Players must maintain a minimum of 80% attendance across the entire year (mid-January to early December) to remain in the Future Squad and be eligible to participate in the following year. Players who do not meet this requirement will not be invited to rejoin the Future Squad the following year, and will be removed from the Future Squad immediately.
- Players are required to notify the Auckland Coaching Team if they will be absent from any session. Attendance will be recorded at every session.
- Players are expected to meet the minimum attendance requirement regardless of curricular or other extracurricular commitments. In exceptional circumstances, the Auckland Coaching Team may grant special dispensation if the conditions outlined in the “Dispensation” section are met.

Future Squad training sessions are at the following times:

- Wednesdays: 5.30 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.
- Saturdays: 3.30 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.
- Sundays: 3.30 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.

- All players participating in the Future Squad must hold a stadium keyholder membership. The cost of a student stadium membership is available on the Auckland Table Tennis website: <https://www.tabletennis.net.nz/membership>
- Players are expected to enter the following tournaments: Auckland Summer Open, Auckland Junior Open, and Auckland Open. A detailed breakdown of tournaments is available: <https://www.tabletennis.net.nz/tournaments/upcoming-tournaments>

## Dispensation

Any reasons for not attending Future Squad training or required tournaments must be submitted in writing prior to the event.

Special dispensation may be granted in cases where a player is:

- severely injured,
- has a medical condition, or
- training and/or competing overseas, including participation in recognised training camps or development programmes (whether or not affiliated with a Club or Table Tennis New Zealand).

All dispensation decisions are at the discretion of the Auckland Coaching Team.

## 5. Future Squad Training Fees

Fees are charged as a fixed weekly rate regardless of exact session hours or attendance. Direct debit payments are spread over 12 months (training from mid-January to early December).

**Future Squad: \$16.15 per hour (2026 season)**

Future Squad Debit Success link:

<https://oc.debitsuccess.com/DirectEntry/DirectDebitRequest/Form?templateid=60678740-5627-492f-b1dc-ece636f1acde>

## 6. Final Provisions

Auckland Table Tennis Association has set up a Future Squad Parents' WhatsApp Group to help streamline communication, share updates, training notices, and other information:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/I62BxV4cw30B83IJMPgJcb>

A Squad Coaching page has been set up on the Auckland Table Tennis Association website:

<https://tabletennis.net.nz/coaching/squad-coaching/>

For general queries about the content of this Handbook please contact Dinyar Irani at [pm@tabletennis.net.nz](mailto:pm@tabletennis.net.nz)

Any matters not addressed in this document will be determined at the discretion of the Auckland Coaching Team. Requests for special consideration must be submitted in writing to Shane Warbrooke at [aucklandtt@xtra.co.nz](mailto:aucklandtt@xtra.co.nz) . All requests will be reviewed, and the Auckland Coaching Team will provide a response.

*Last updated: 27-March-2026*

# Appendix A: Future Squad Objective Skill Assessment

## Overview

The Future Squad selection process is based on a structured objective skill assessment designed to evaluate fundamental table tennis abilities appropriate for the player's stage of development. The goal of Future Squad is long-term development and enjoyment of the sport, not early selection or exclusion.

The purpose of the assessment is not to compare children against each other, but to determine whether a player is ready to benefit from the Future Squad training environment.

Players are assessed in the following areas:

- Ball control and coordination
- Forehand and backhand consistency
- Basic movement and balance
- Rally control
- Push (chop) control
- Reaction ability

Each player performs the same tasks under similar conditions, and scoring follows a fixed point system. Coaches do not adjust scores based on opinion, match results, or personal preference.

Players must achieve a minimum overall score of 70 points to be considered for invitation to the Future Squad. In addition, players must score at least 50% of the maximum points available in each individual Category. This ensures that:

- sessions remain productive for all players
- players can successfully complete training drills
- confidence is maintained in a positive learning environment

If a player does not yet reach the required level, this does not mean the player lacks potential. It means the player will benefit from additional development before reassessment. Assessments are held multiple times per year, allowing players regular opportunities to qualify.

## General Principles

1. Each drill is demonstrated once before testing.
2. Each player receives two official attempts (a repeat attempt is permitted only in the case of external interference).
3. Balls are played by a coach (or sparring partner) using controlled blocking, multiball feeding is not used.
4. Scores are recorded immediately by the observing coach.

## Scoring

### 1. Ball Control & Coordination (20 points)

Task: alternate bounce on forehand and backhand sides for 60 seconds. After completing catch the ball.

#### Scoring

- 60+ bounces = 20 points
- 50–59 = 16 points
- 40–49 = 12 points
- 30–39 = 8 points
- 20–29 = 4 points
- <20 = 0 points

### 2. Forehand Drive Consistency (12 points)

Task: coach blocks with backhand from the forehand diagonal. Players perform forehand drive to the forehand diagonal. Player performs forehand drives only (limited topspin). 40-ball sequence. After completing catch the ball.

#### Scoring

- 35–40 consecutive drives without interruption = 12 points
- 30–34 = 10 points
- 25–29 = 8 points
- 20–24 = 6 points
- 15–19 = 4 points
- 10–14 = 2 points
- <9 = 0 points

### 3. Backhand Drive Consistency (12 points)

Task: same format and scoring as forehand drive consistency. Coach blocks with backhand. Players perform backhand drive to the backhand diagonal. Player performs backhand drives only (limited topspin). 40-ball sequence. After completing catch the ball.

#### **4. Forehand–Backhand Alternation (10 points)**

Task: coach blocks with backhand from the backhand corner. Forehand-backhand continuous sequence (10 repetitions) with correct position (stance) transition.

Scoring

- Completed without interruption = 10 points
- 1 interruption = 7 points
- 2 interruptions = 4 points
- 3 or more interruptions = 0 points

#### **5. Rally Placement Test (10 points)**

Task: coach blocks with their backhand. Coach blocks all table free. The player must place 20 balls into a designated target zone on the coach's side of the table.

Scoring

- 20+ successful placements = 10 points
- 15–19 = 7 points
- 10–14 = 4 points
- <10 = 0 points

#### **6. Service Control (10 points)**

Task: player conducts 10 serves to marked zones (four zones):

- short to the forehand (3 serves)
- short to the middle (3 serves)
- long to the backhand (2 serves)
- long to the middle (2 serves)

Scoring

- 9–10 successful serves to marked zones = 10 points
- 7–8 = 7 points
- 5–6 = 4 points
- <5 = 0 points

#### **7. Push (Chop) Control (10 points)**

Task: coach uses a controlled backspin (push) from the backhand side. The player alternates playing backhand-forehand, moving between the backhand corner and the forehand corner. The player returns all balls to the backhand side of the table while alternating strokes. Conduct 10 pushes to the coach's backhand side:

#### Scoring

- 9–10 successful pushes = 10 points
- 7–8 = 7 points
- 5–6 = 4 points
- <5 = 0 points

#### **8. Footwork Drill (10 points)**

Task: alternating forehand, middle, backhand movement sequence (12 balls).

#### Scoring

- 12 successful contacts = 10 points
- 10–11 = 7 points
- 8–9 = 4 points
- <8 = 0 points

#### **9. Reaction Test (6 points)**

Task: player is to catch a reaction ball after it is bounced by a coach. Player to catch the reaction ball with their playing hand (6 attempts).

6 catches = 6 points

5 = 5 points

4 = 4 points

3 = 3 points

2 = 2 points

1 = 1 point

0 = 0 points

This process allows:

- comparable scoring between coaches
- transparency for parents
- measurable development over time